

Sutra Unlocking the Mysteries: The Samdhinirmocana Sutra

The enlightening being Avalokiteshvara also asked the Buddha,
"How many different kinds of each of the six transcendent ways are there?"

The Buddha replied,
"There are three kinds. The three kinds of giving are,
giving of teaching, giving of goods, and giving of fearlessness.

"The three kinds of discipline are the discipline of increasingly giving up what is not good, the discipline of increasingly developing what is good, and the discipline of increasingly benefiting sentient beings.

"The three kinds of forbearance are the forbearance of bearing injury, the forbearance of serenity in suffering, and the forbearance of truthful observation of realities.

"The three kinds of diligence are diligence as armor, diligence of concerted effort to increasingly develop good qualities, and diligence of concentrated effort to help sentient beings.

"The three kinds of meditation are meditation in a state of bliss without discriminating thought, still and silent, extremely tranquil and impeccable, thus curing the pains of afflictions; meditation that brings forth virtuous qualities and powers; and meditation that brings forth benefit for sentient beings.

"The three kinds of insight are insight focused on conventional worldly truth, insight focused on ultimate truth, and insight focused on benefiting sentient beings."

Avalokiteshvara also asked,
"Why are the transcendent ways named transcendent ways?"

The Buddha replied,
"For five reasons: no defiling habits; no attachment; no fault; no discrimination; proper dedication.
No defiling habits means not sticking to anything inconsistent with the transcendent ways.
No attachment means the mind is not tied to the ripening of the fruits and the rewards of the transcendent ways.
No fault means that there are no defiling things mixed up in these transcendent ways and they are carried out skillfully without error.
No discrimination means not clinging literally to the individual characteristics of the transcendent ways.
Proper dedication means dedicating the transcendent ways one has performed and developed to the quest for supreme perfect enlightenment."

Avalokiteshvara asked,
"What do you call things that are inconsistent with the transcendent ways?"

The Buddha replied,
"In general, there are six kinds. First, seeing profound worth and advantage in all pleasures such as happiness, sensual enjoyment, wealth, and dominion. Second, seeing profound worth and advantage in the acts, words, and thoughts indulged in the pursuit of enjoyments. Third, seeing profound worth and advantage in not enduring the scorn of others. Fourth, seeing profound worth and advantage in not cultivating religious practices and in clinging to pleasures. Fifth, seeing profound worth and advantage in confused activities in the midst of the hustle and bustle of society. Sixth, seeing profound worth and advantage in what one perceives, feels, and cognizes, in talk and nonsense."

Avalokiteshvara asked the Buddha,
 "What are different fruits of all these ways of transcendence?"

The Buddha replied,
 "In brief, there are six:
 gaining great wealth;
 being reborn in a good condition;
 having no enemies, no disruption, and much joy and happiness;
 being a leader of people;
 having no physical disturbance or injury;
 having a great clan."

Avalokiteshvara asked the Buddha,
 "What are the things that adulterate the ways of transcendence?"

The Buddha replied,
 "This generally comes from four kinds of religious practice:
 practice without compassion, incorrect practice, inconsistent practice,
 or careless practice.
 Incorrect practice means straying from and losing other ways of transcendence
 while cultivating one way of transcendence."

Avalokiteshvara asked,
 "What is meant by inexpedient action?"

The Buddha replied,
 "When enlightening beings help people by means of the ways of transcendence,
 if they just give them material aid and consider that enough, failing to get them
 out of bad conditions and into good states, this is called inexpedient action.
 Why? Just doing this for people is not to be called truly helping them."

"It is like the case of dung. Be it much or little, nothing can make it
 fragrant and clean. In the same way, because of the pain that is due to
 transience, living beings are suffering by nature; there is no expedient
 but to help them out with the entangling forms of material goods so as
 to enable them to become comfortable. But only haven in the sublime
 truth can be called the foremost benefit."

The enlightening being Avalokiteshvara also asked the Buddha,
 "How many purities do all the transcendent ways have?"

"The Buddha replied,
 "I have never said that the transcendent ways have any other purities
 besides the aforementioned five aspects. I will speak of the aspects of
 purity of the transcendent ways, however, based on these matters,
 in general and in particular."

"In general, the aspects of purity of all the transcendent ways are
 seven in number."

First, enlightening beings do not seek to be known to
 others for these practices.
 Second, once they have seen these practices,
 they do not become partisans or fanatics.
 Third, they do not entertain doubts about these practices, such as
 whether or not one can actually attain great enlightenment thereby.
 Fourth, they never praise themselves, slander others, or slight anyone.
 Fifth, they are never proud and indulgent.
 Sixth, they never consider a little attainment to be enough.
 Seventh, they do not become jealous of others on account of
 these practices."

"As for the aspects of purity of all the transcendent ways individually,
 these are also seven in number; that is, enlightening beings practice in
 accord with the seven characteristics of purity of giving as I teach."

First, they practice pure giving through purity of gift.
 Second, they practice pure giving through purity of conduct.
 Third, they practice pure giving through purity of vision.
 Fourth, they practice pure giving through purity of mind.
 Fifth, they practice pure giving through purity of speech.
 Sixth, they practice pure giving through purity of knowledge.
 Seventh, they practice pure giving through purification of defilements.
 These are called the seven kinds of purity of giving.

"Enlightening beings can also understand all the points to be learned in the established rules of conduct.
 They can understand how to avoid transgression and how to be complete with constant discipline,
 stable discipline,
 consciously performed discipline,
 subconsciously operative discipline.
 They can understand how to take in and study all points to be learned.
 These are called the seven purities of discipline.

"Suppose enlightening beings have deep faith when the results of their actions variously develop,
 and do not get upset when anything unfavorable occurs,
 and do not holler back or get angry or violent,
 do not have recourse to fear or humiliation,
 do not retaliate in any way,
 do not hold grudges,
 are not angered by admonition,
 and do not wait for others to admonish them.
 They do not practice forbearance with a mind emotionally affected by fear,
 and they do not give it up because of favor.
 These are called the seven kinds of purity of forbearance.

"Suppose enlightening beings realize the equal nature of diligence,
 and neither elevate themselves nor look down on others because of their own great diligence,
 are imbued with great strength and great energy,
 are capable, steadfast and vigorous,
 and do not abandon good ways.
 These are called the seven kinds of purity of diligence.

"Suppose enlightening beings have attained concentration and meditation with perfect comprehension of forms,
 full concentration and meditation,
 complete concentration and meditation,
 progressive concentration and meditation,
 independent concentration and meditation,
 well-cultivated concentration and meditation,
 and infinite concentration and meditation,
 through learning from the canon of enlightening beings;
 these are called the seven kinds of purity of meditation.

"If enlightening beings avoid the two extremes of affirmation and denial, and travel the middle path, that is called insight.
 By this insight, they truly know the meaning of the doors of liberation, the doors of liberation that are emptiness, wishlessness, and signlessness. They truly know the meaning of having inherent nature, referring to conceptualized nature, dependent nature, or true nature.
 They truly know the meaning of having no inherent nature, referring to the essencelessness of appearances, origination, and ultimate truth.
 They truly know conventional truth, referring to the five fields of knowledge.
 They truly know the ultimate truth, referring to seven suchnesses, or seven kinds of thusness.
 They also dwell much on one pure principle beyond all descriptions without discrimination; the immeasurable totality of truths is the focus, and by observation they can accomplish the practice of the teachings and their auxiliaries.

These are called the seven kinds of purity of insight."

Avalokiteshvara then asked, "What functions does each of the five aspects you mentioned have?"

The Buddha replied, "Those aspects have five functions.
 Because of having no defiling habits, there being no polluting influence or clinging, enlightening beings in the present state are always seriously and diligently engaged in the transcendent ways they are practicing, without any negligence.
 Because of having no attachment, they internalize the cause of future alertness.
 Because of having no fault, they can correctly practice the transcendent ways to supremely good fulfillment, supremely good clarity, and supremely good purity.
 Because of having no discrimination, by skill in means the transcendent ways are soon fulfilled.
 Because of proper dedication, wherever one may be, the transcendent ways and their pleasant fruits will all be boundless, up to supreme perfect enlightenment."

Avalokiteshvara then asked, "Of the transcendent ways thus explained, what aspect is greatest, what is undefiled, what is most brilliant, what is immovable, what is most pure?"

The Buddha replied,
 "The natures of having no defiling habits, no attachment, and proper dedication are greatest.
 The natures of impeccability and nondiscrimination, and absence of action with tainted judgment, are most brilliant.
 Having entered the stage of nonaggression is called immovable.
 If the ten stages take in Buddha hood, this inclusion is most pure."

Avalokiteshvara also asked, "Why are the pleasant fruits and developments of the transcendent ways that enlightening beings attain perpetual and inexhaustible? And why are the transcendent ways inexhaustible too?"

The Buddha replied, "Because they progressively develop cooperatively as the enlightening beings practice them uninterruptedly."

Avalokiteshvara asked, "Why do the enlightening beings deeply believe in the transcendent ways and have enthusiasm for them, rather than the pleasant fruits of the transcendent ways?"

The Buddha replied, "There are five reasons.
 First, the transcendent ways are the cause of supreme joy and bliss.
 Second, the transcendent ways are the cause of ultimate benefit for everyone, oneself and others included.
 Third, the transcendent ways are the cause of pleasant rewards in the future.
 Fourth, the transcendent ways are not a basis for defilements.
 Fifth, the transcendent ways are not things that ultimately change and perish."

Avalokiteshvara asked, "How many kinds of supreme power does each of the transcendent ways have?"

The Buddha replied, "Each one has four.
 First, when correctly practicing these transcendent ways, one is able to abandon envy, bad conduct, anger, laziness, distraction, and opinionated tendencies.
 Second, when correctly practicing these transcendent ways, one can make them true sustenance for supreme perfect enlightenment.
 Third, when correctly practicing these transcendent ways, one can absorb them into oneself and benefit others thereby.
 When correctly practicing these transcendent ways, one will be able to attain great endless pleasant rewards in the future."

Avalokiteshvara asked,
 "What is the cause of these transcendent ways? What is the effect?
 What is the benefit?"

The Buddha replied,
 "All these transcendent ways have great compassion as their cause.
 Subtle, pleasant fruits benefiting all sentient beings are the effect.
 Complete unexcelled great enlightenment is the great benefit."

Avalokiteshvara asked,
 "If enlightening beings have endless wealth and have developed great
 compassion, why is there still poverty to be found among people?"

The Buddha replied,
 "This is due to people's own errors in action.
 Enlightening beings are always altruistic and always have endless wealth
 and treasure; if there were no evildoing on the part of people
 themselves to form a barrier, how could poverty be found in the world?
 Such people are like hungry ghosts oppressed by great heat and thirst
 who see the ocean as all dried up; it is not the fault of the ocean, but
 of their own deeds. In the same way, the wealth given away by
 enlightening beings is like the ocean, without any flaw, but there is
 error on the part of people's own actions, like the power of the evil
 deeds of hungry ghosts, which causes there to be no water."

Avalokiteshvara asked,
 "By what transcendent way is the essencelessness
 of all things apprehended?"

The Buddha replied,
 "You can apprehend the essencelessness of things by
 transcendent insight."

Avalokiteshvara asked,
 "If transcendent insight can apprehend the
 essencelessness of things, why does it not apprehend having an essence?"

The Buddha replied,
 "I have never said that essencelessness is apprehended by essencelessness.
 Essencelessness is beyond words, inwardly realized, but cannot be explained
 without words.
 Therefore I say that transcendent insight can apprehend the essencelessness
 of things."

Avalokiteshvara asked,
 "What are the ways of transcendence, the near-transcendent ways, and the
 great transcendent ways of which you speak?"

The Buddha replied,
 "If enlightening beings spend measureless time practicing giving and so on,
 and they develop good qualities, but yet their afflictions are still active
 and they are as yet unable to master them but are mastered by them, this
 is referred to as the operation of devotion in the warming-up phase of the
 stage of devoted practice. At this time, they are called ways of transcendence.

"If enlightening beings practice giving and the rest of the ways for
 measureless time and gradually develop more perfectly accomplished good
 qualities, yet their afflictions are still active, but they can master
 them and are not mastered by them, this refers to the first stage up,
 and these are called near-transcendent ways.

"If enlightening beings practice giving and the rest of the ways for
 measureless time further and perfect good qualities even more, so that
 no afflictions are active, which occurs from the eighth stage up, these

are called great transcendent ways."

Avalokiteshvara asked,

"How many kinds of stupefaction from afflictions can occur in these stages?"

The Buddha replied,

"In brief, there are three. First are stupefactions that lose their partners.

This occurs in the first five stages. Why?

Active expressions of non-congenital afflictions are partners of the active expressions of congenital afflictions; since they cease to exist during that time, they are called stupefactions that lose their partners.

"Second are weak stupefactions. This refers to the minute active expressions of afflictions in the sixth and seventh stages, because they will not be expressed in action if you practice quelling them.

"Third are subtle stupefactions. This refers to the eighth stage up, where afflictions are not actively expressed, but there is still the barrier of knowledge as a basis."

Avalokiteshvara asked,

"By ending how many kinds of gross materialism are these stupefactions revealed?"

The Buddha replied,

"Just two kinds. The first two are revealed by ending gross materialism in the skin; the third is revealed by ending gross materialism in the flesh. If one ends gross materialism in the bones, I say that one has forever left the realm of stupefaction and is in the stage of Buddha hood."

Avalokiteshvara asked,

"How many incalculable eons does it take to end this kind of grossness?"

The Buddha replied,

"Three incalculable eons, or infinite eons. That is because the eons in the years, months, fortnights, days, nights, hours, minutes, seconds, and moments cannot be counted."

Avalokiteshvara asked,

"What are the characteristics, what are the faults, what are the merits of the afflictions aroused by enlightening beings in each stage?"

The Buddha replied,

"The characteristic is non-defiling. Why?

The enlightening beings have certainly understood the spiritual realm of all principles in the first stage, and so they must arouse afflictions knowingly, not because of ignorance. Therefore the characteristic of the afflictions is said to be non-defiling. Because the afflictions cannot cause pain to the enlightening beings themselves, they have no fault. Enlightening beings arouse such afflictions as will be able to stop the causes of suffering among sentient beings; therefore they have immeasurable merits."

Avalokiteshvara said,

"It is wonderful how great the virtues and benefits of supreme enlightenment are, that enlightening beings may arouse afflictions and yet surpass the goodness of all people and individual saints, to say nothing of their other countless virtues."

Avalokiteshvara also asked the Buddha,

"You say the vehicle of disciples and the great vehicle are just one vehicle. What is the secret meaning behind this?"

The Buddha replied,

"In the vehicle of disciples, I explain the nature of various things,

such as the five clusters, the inner six sense faculties,
the outer six sense data, and so on.
In the great vehicle, I say those things are one and the same reality realm,
with one and the same innermost meaning.
Therefore I do not say the vehicles are different.

"Yet there may be those who develop a mistaken notion of the meaning
according to the words, so that one vehicle is aggrandized and one is
diminished. Such people also think the different principles of the
vehicles are mutually contradictory, and they argue among themselves
more and more. That is the secret meaning behind this."

Then, to recapitulate, the Buddha spoke these verses:

The contents of the stages, and what is to be cured,
Higher developments, undertakings, and learning:
Cultivating the will based on the great vehicle
Expounded by Buddha results in great awakening.
I explain the variety of phenomena,
And also say their innermost meaning is one,
Whether in lower or higher vehicle;
So I say the vehicles have no difference.
If you make up false literalist notions of the meaning,
Aggrandizing or diminishing,
Saying the greater and lesser vehicles are opposed,
This ignorant interpretation produces conflict.

Then the enlightening being Avalokiteshvara asked the Buddha,
"Within this teaching of unraveling of mysteries, what should this teaching be
called? How should I uphold it?"

The Buddha replied,
"This is called the definitive teaching of the transcendent ways of the stages,
and you should uphold this teaching of the definitive meaning of the transcendent
ways of the stages of enlightening beings."

When this teaching was spoken, there were seventy-five thousand
enlightening beings in the audience who attained absorption in the light
of the great vehicle of enlightening beings.

8. Deeds of the Enlightened

Then the great enlightening beings Manjushri, the Glorious One, said to
the Buddha,
"You speak of the reality body of the enlightened who have arrived at thusness.
What are the characteristics of the reality body?"

The Buddha said, "Thoroughly cultivating the transcendent ways in the
stages of enlightening, attaining emancipation, transformation of the
mental basis and completion. These are called characteristics of the
reality body of the enlightened.

"These characteristics are inconceivable for two reasons; because of
absence of false conceptions and because nothing is fabricated. And yet
people think up false conceptions of something created and cling to
them."

Manjushri asked,
"Is the transformation of the mental basis that is attained by hearers
and individual illuminates called the reality body?"

The Buddha said, "No."

Manjushri asked,
"What body is it called?"

The Buddha replied,
 "The body of liberation. All hearers and individual illuminates are said to be equal to the Buddha's in terms of the body of liberation. In terms of the reality body, they are said to be different. The reality body of Buddha's is different by the most excellent difference of infinite qualities, which are beyond counting, or even approximation by simile."

Manjushri also asked the Buddha,
 "How should we know the characteristics of the origination of the enlightened?"

The Buddha replied,
 "The works of the emanated bodies of all Buddha's are like the world producing all species. The characteristics thereof are adornment and maintenance by the myriad qualities of the enlightened. You should realize that the characteristics of the emanated body have origination, but the characteristics of the reality body have no origination."

Manjushri asked,
 "How should we know the skill in means of manifesting emanated bodies?"

The Buddha replied,
 "Being conceived simultaneously in a royal or noble family in all Buddha-lands in all universes, being born, growing up, experiencing pleasures, leaving home, sharing ascetic practices, giving up ascetic practices, and attaining true enlightenment are manifested in succession. This is called the Buddha's skill in means of manifesting emanated bodies."

Manjushri asked,
 "How many kinds of different speech sounds are held by the body of all Buddha's, by which words the immature people they teach are matured, while those who are already mature quickly attain liberation by focusing on them?"

The Buddha replied,
 "There are three kinds of words of Buddha's.
 One kind is scripture.
 Second is discipline.
 Third is the mother."

Manjushri asked,
 "What are scripture, discipline, and the mother?"

The Buddha replied,
 "When I reveal teachings regarding what is so, based on what will help people, this is called scripture. This may be based on four things, on nine things, or on twenty-nine things.

"What are the four things?
 First is listening.
 Second is taking it to heart.
 Third is putting it into practice.
 Fourth is enlightenment.

"What are the nine things?
 Defining people, defining their experience, defining their origin, defining their life after birth, defining their defilement and purity, defining their differences, defining the explainer, defining the explained, defining the assemblies.

"What are the twenty-nine things?
 Based on contamination, there are ingrained actions. These go on one after another. Then one thinks of this as a person, and this becomes a cause of future routines. Conceiving notions of phenomena, these become a cause of future routines. Based on what is pure, there is focus on objects of meditation.

One then works diligently on this. The mind is then at peace.
 One experiences well-being in the present life. There are techniques of transcending all causes of misery.
 There are three ways of knowing these thoroughly:
 based on thorough knowledge of error; based on thorough knowledge of wrong actions; based on thorough knowledge of inner removal of conceit.
 Practicing these bases leads to experience of realization;
 cultivation leads to stabilization. There are appropriate modes of practice for that, with appropriate points of focus.
 This involves skill in observing what has been stopped and what has not, skill in observing confusion and distraction, ability to avoid confusion and distraction, and knowledge of the basis of non-distraction.
 There is intense application of effort in practice, leading to the benefits of practice, which produce steadfastness, embodiment of sagacious conduct, and embodiment of the accompaniments of sagacious conduct.
 Ultimately there is arrival at reality, realization of nirvana, and correct insight into the world through proper guidance, the peak of correct insight, beyond that attained by all outsiders.
 There is also regression caused by not practicing this, regression that is so called because of not practicing the right teaching, not because of a fault in the insight.

"The indications of specific proscriptions and the rules associated with specific proscriptions applying to disciples and enlightening beings are called discipline."

Manjushri asked,
 "How many aspects of the specific prohibitions for enlightening beings are there?"

The Buddha replied,
 "There are seven.
 First is explaining the guidelines to be accepted.
 Second is explaining the advantages of following them.
 Third is explaining things that tend toward transgression.
 Fourth is explaining the nature of transgression.
 Fifth is explaining the nature of non-transgression.
 Sixth is explaining how to get away from transgression.
 Seventh is explaining the relinquishment of rules of behavior."

The Buddha continued,
 "When I define, analyze, and illustrate things in terms of eleven kinds of characteristics, this is called the mother.
 What are these eleven kinds of characteristics?
 The first kind is the characteristics of mundane convention.
 The second kind is the characteristics of ultimate truth.
 The third kind is the characteristics of the points of focus of the elements of enlightenment.
 The fourth kind is the characteristics of practice.
 The fifth kind is the characteristics of identity.
 The sixth kind is the characteristics of effects.
 The seventh kind is the characteristics of reception of teaching.
 The eighth kind is the characteristics of obstacles to the teaching.
 The ninth kind is characteristics of accord with the teaching.
 The tenth kind is characteristics of ills.
 The eleventh kind is characteristics of benefits attained.

"There are three kinds of characteristics of mundane convention.
 First is speaking in terms of personality.
 Second is speaking in terms of conceptualized identities.
 Third is speaking in terms of the functions of phenomena.

"The characteristics of ultimate truth refer to the seven suchnesses, or seven kinds of thusness.

"The characteristics of the points of focus of the elements of

enlightenment refer to all kinds of objects of knowledge.

"The characteristics of practice refer to eight practices of contemplation:

contemplation of real truth,
contemplation of construction,
contemplation of faults,
contemplation of virtues,
contemplation of principles,
contemplation of routines,
contemplation of reason,
and contemplation of totality and distinction.

"Real truth means the true thusness of all things.

"Construction means setting up the personality, or setting up the conceptualized identities of things, or setting up all-embracing answers, particularized answers, answers made after returning a question, and answering by not answering, or setting up the difference between covert and overt predictions of enlightenment.

"Faults refer to the various defiled states of which I speak, which have innumerable different ills.

"Virtues refer to the various pure states of which I speak, which have innumerable different benefits.

"Principles are of six kinds:

principles of true meaning,
principles of realization,
principles of teaching and guidance,
principles of avoiding extremes, principles of inconceivability, and principles of intended meaning.

"Routines refer to the becoming, subsistence, and decay of what is created in past, present, and future, as well as the causal conditions, successive conditions, conditioning conditions, and dominant conditions.

"Reason is of four kinds:

the reason of relativity,
the reason of function,
the reason of realization,
and the reason of natural law.

"The reason of relativity means the causes or conditions by which one can produce practices and corresponding explanations.

"The reason of function means the causes or conditions by which one can apprehend things, or deal with them, or put them to use once they have arisen.

"The reason of realization means the causes or conditions by which one can establish the principles that have been set up, explained, and proposed so as to affect correct awakening.

"This latter reason is also of two general kinds, pure and impure. It is called pure based on five characteristics, and called impure based on seven characteristics.

"What are the five characteristics based on which it is called pure?

First is apprehension by direct witness.

Second is apprehension based on direct witness.

Third is deduction by analogy.

Fourth is complete truthfulness.

Fifth is true purity of teaching.

"Apprehension by direct witness refers to the impermanence of all conditioned things, the suffering inherent in all conditioned states, and the identitylessness, or selflessness, of all phenomena. These are apprehended by direct experience in the world. This sort of thing is called that which is apprehended by direct witness.

"That which is apprehended based on direct witness refers to such things as the instantaneousness of all that happens, the existence of other worlds, and the nondisappearance of pure and impure deeds. Those things which cannot be actually seen but can be deduced are said to be apprehended based on direct witness, because they can be seen by way of crude impermanence, because the various differences in people can be found to be due to their various actions, and because it can be found that the happiness or misery of people is based on their pure or impure deeds.

"That which is deduced by analogy means drawing on birth and death, which are common knowledge, from among the assemblages of inner and outer patterns, drawing on commonly known and experienced focus of lack of freedom as analogies, and drawing on commonly known and experienced external deterioration and growth as analogies.

"Complete truthfulness means positive ability to establish what is affirmed, whether by direct witness, based on direct witness, or by analogy.

"The truly pure Teaching refers to what is said by the omniscient one, such as that nirvana is ultimate peace.

"Skillful examination of pure reason is so called on the basis of these five characteristics. Because it is pure, it should be put into practice."

Then Manjushri asked the Buddha,
"How many characteristics of omniscience are there?"

The Buddha replied,
"In brief, there are five.
First is appearing in the world with the voice of all-knowledge and being heard everywhere.
Second is perfection of the thirty-two marks of greatness.
Third is attainment of the ten powers, with ability to cut off the doubts of all people.
Fourth is attainment of the fourfold confidence in expounding the truth, unrefuted by any other arguments, able to refute all false arguments.
Fifth is manifesting the attainability of the eightfold noble path and its fruits.
Living in this way, cutting through the web of doubts, being irrefutable while able to refute others, manifesting attainment of the noble path - these five are called characteristics of omniscience.

"This reason of realization is called pure based on direct experience, inference, wise teaching, and the aforementioned characteristics.

"As for the seven characteristics that are called impure, the first is when other cases in the same category can be found.
Second is when other cases in different categories can be found.
Third is when everything can be found in the same category.
Fourth is when everything can be found in different categories.
Fifth is when an example is taken from a different category.
Sixth is not being completely true.
Seventh is not being pure teaching.

"If reference is made to all phenomena being essentially representations of consciousness, then it can be said that everything can be found in the same category.

"If reference is made to the different appearances, natures, functions, laws, causes, and effects, pursuing each of these different characteristics is certain to produce even more individually different characteristics. Then it can be said that everything can be found in different categories.

"If other cases can be found in the same category, or if an example applies to everything else as well, because of this the proposition is not established with certainty; this is called not being completely true.

"Also, if other cases can be found in different categories, or if an example applies to everything in the same category, because of this the proposition is not established with certainty, so it is said to be not completely true.

"Not being completely true, it is not well-examined, pure reason. Not being pure, it should not be practiced.

"If an example is taken from a different category, or if it is not pure teaching, know that neither the substance nor the essence IS pure.

"The reason of natural law means that whether or not a Buddha appears in the world, the nature of reality remains unaffected; realities abide in the reality realm. This is called the reason of natural law.

"Totality and distinction refer to first generally expounding one statement of the teaching, then subsequently distinguishing and definitely revealing the differentiations in various statements.

"Characteristics of identity refer to the distinct elements by which it is possible to attain enlightenment, which I explain as involving practices and having conditions, such as the four points of mindfulness.

"Characteristics of effects refer to the extermination of mundane and transmundane afflictions, and to the resulting worldly and transcendental virtues developed.

"Characteristics of reception and teaching refer to reception by liberated intelligence and explaining for others.

"Characteristics of obstacles to the Teaching refer to polluting factors that can hinder the practice of the elements of enlightenment.

"Characteristics of accord with the Teaching refer to practices that accomplish a lot.

"Characteristics of ills refer to the faults in the factors that obstruct the Teaching.

"Characteristics of benefits refer to the virtues of following the Teaching."

Then the enlightening being Manjushri said to the Buddha,
 "Please give the enlightening beings a brief talk on concentrated formulations of scripture, discipline, and the mother, not common to outsiders, by which concentrated formulations enlightening beings are enabled to gain access to the deepest inner meanings of the teachings expounded by the enlightened."

The Buddha said to Manjushri,
 "Listen and I will give you a brief talk on the uncommon concentrated formulae that enables enlightening beings to gain understanding of the words I speak with hidden intent.

"I say that all things, be they polluted phenomena or pure phenomena, are totally void of function, and also void of personality. Because nothing has any connection to fabrication, it is not that polluted phenomena are impure at first and then later will be purified, and it is not that pure phenomena were purified after having first been polluted. Ordinary mortals cling to the distinctions in identities of personalities projected on phenomena in crude material bodies, and become stupefied by arbitrary views; because of these conditions, they conceive of the ideas of self and belongings.

Due to these erroneous ideas, they think,
 'I see,
 I hear,
 I smell,
 I taste,
 I feel,
 I know,
 I consume,
 I work,
 I am polluted,
 I am pure,'
 and misguided efforts of corresponding varieties go into operation.

"Any who can know this as it really is, can then detach from the body of gross materiality forever and attain the ultimate purity in which no affliction remains, beyond all falsehood, based on non-contrivance, free from deliberate effort.

"This is a summary of the uncommon concentrated formulae."

Then the Buddha spoke a verse to recapitulate:
 All phenomena, polluted and pure
 Are void of function and personality.
 Following my teaching, detach from fabrication,
 And polluted and pure things are neither before nor after.
 Stupefied views of the gross material body
 Condition ideas of self and possession;
 Based on this, one wrongly imagines,
 "I see, I eat, I am polluted or pure."
 If one can know this as it really is,
 One can detach forever from the gross body
 And attain undefiled purity, beyond falsehood,
 Based on noncontrivance, free from deliberate effort.

Then the enlightening being Manjushri asked the Buddha,
 "How should we know the characteristics of the arousal of a Buddha's mind?"

The Buddha replied,
 "Buddha hood is not manifested by mind, intellect, or consciousness. Nevertheless, the arising of mental events without deliberate effort does occur in Buddha's. You should know that these phenomena are like magical apparitions."

Manjushri asked,
 "If the reality body of Buddha's is beyond all deliberate effort, how can mental events occur without effort?"

The Buddha replied,
 "Arousal of mind occurs because of the power of concerted action of technique and insight previously cultivated.

"For example, when one enters into mindless sleep, one does not make a deliberate effort to awaken; one awakens again by virtue of the power and momentum of previous engagement in action.

"It is also like being in extinct trance: one does not make a deliberate effort to arise from trance; one arises from trance by virtue of the power and momentum of previous engagement in action.

"Just as the mind is rearoused when coming out of deep sleep or extinct trance, in the same way mental events recur in Buddha's by virtue of the power of concerted actions of technique and insight previously cultivated."

Manjushri then asked the Buddha,
"Should an emanation body of a Buddha be said to have a mind or to have no mind?"

The Buddha replied,
"It neither has a mind nor has no mind. Why?
Because of having no mind relative to self and because of having a mind relative to others."

Manjushri then asked,
"What is the difference between the sphere of the Buddha's and the realm of the Buddha's?"

The Buddha replied,
"The sphere of the Buddha's refers to all kinds of pure domains of enlightenment adorned with infinite inconceivable qualities, common to all Buddha's.

"The realm of the Buddha's refers to all kinds of distinctions of five realms. What are the five?
First is the realm of sentient beings.
Second is the realm of worlds.
Third is the realm of principle.
Fourth is the realm of pacification.
Fifth is the realm of expedient techniques of pacification.

"This is the distinction between the sphere and the realm of the Buddha's."

Then Manjushri asked the Buddha,
"World Honored One, Buddha's attain true awakening, turn the wheel of true teaching, and enter ultimate nirvana;
by what characteristics should these three things be known?"

The Buddha replied,
"You should know that these three are all nondualistic.
That means Buddha's neither attain true awakening nor do not attain true awakening, neither turn the wheel of true teaching nor do not turn the wheel of true teaching, neither enter ultimate nirvana nor do not enter ultimate nirvana. Why?
Because the reality body of Buddha's is ultimately pure, and because the emanation bodies of Buddha's are always manifest."

Manjushri also asked the Buddha,
"Sentient beings see, hear, and attend the emanation bodies only, whereby they develop virtues. What affinity has Buddha with them?"

The Buddha replied,
"Their relationship with Buddha is the supreme object of focus for them; and the emanation body involved is maintained by the power of Buddha."

Then Manjushri asked,
"If it is equanimitous and effortless, how does the body of Buddha radiate the light of great knowledge and produce the images of countless emanation bodies for sentient beings? The body of liberation of hearers and individual illuminates does not have these things."

The Buddha replied,
 "It is like the light radiating equanimitously and effortlessly from the sun and moon, or from water and fire crystals.
 Only water and fire crystals held by beings of great power can do this, not other water and fire crystals. So it is because of the influential power of the actions of sentient beings.

"It is also like imprints stamped from a jewel engraved by a skilled artisan. Imprints cannot come from other jewels, which are not engraved. In the same way, the reality body of Buddha's is put together by focus on the infinite techniques and insights of the realm of reality, cultivating them supremely well and polishing them to perfection; from this it is possible to radiate the light of great knowledge and produce the images of all sorts of emanation bodies. Such things do not come from the body of liberation alone."

Then Manjushri said to the Buddha,
 "As the World Honored One says; the power and support of Buddha's and enlightening beings enable people to be born in rich and noble families in the realm of desire, with personal and material fulfillment. Personal and material fulfillment in the heavens of the realm of desire, or the realms of form and formlessness, can also be attained. World Honored One, what is the inner meaning of this? "

The Buddha replied,
 "The power and support of Buddha's and enlightening beings; be it their ways or their practices, can enable people to attain personal and material fulfillment in all situations, in the sense that we explain to them such-and-such ways and practices according to their needs, so that any who correctly carry out these ways and practices will attain personal and material fulfillment in all situations.

"If people violate these ways and practices and make light of them, and if they have a vicious and malevolent attitude toward me, then after their lives are ended, the bodies and material goods they will get wherever they are will be base and inferior.

"Manjushri, in view of these conditions, you should realize that the power and support of Buddha's and enlightening beings can not only make personal and material fulfillment possible; the support and power of Buddha's and enlightening beings can also make people's bodies and possessions base and inferior."

Manjushri then asked the Buddha,
 "World Honored One, in defiled lands, what things are easy to find, and what things are hard to find?
 In pure lands, what things are easy to find, and what things are hard to find?"

The Buddha replied,
 "In defiled lands, eight things are easy to find, while two things are hard to find.

"What are the eight things that are easy to find?
 First is false philosophies.
 Second is suffering sentient beings.
 Third is differences in race, caste, and family, and their flourishing and decline over the generations.
 Fourth is the currency of bad practices and evil acts.
 Fifth is repeated violation of ethics.
 Sixth is bad tendencies and miserable states.
 Seventh is lesser vehicles.
 Eighth is enlightening beings with inferior devotion and effort.

"What two things are hard to come by?
 One is an assembly of enlightening beings with higher devotion and intense effort.

Second is the appearance of a Buddha in the world.

"In pure lands, the situation is reversed. The former eight things are very hard to find, while the latter two are easy to find."

Now Manjushri asked the Buddha,
"Within this teaching explaining the deep mysteries, how should we name these instructions, and how should we follow them?"

The Buddha replied,
"These are called instructions in the complete meaning of the deeds of the enlightened.
You should follow them as instructions in the complete meaning of the deeds of the enlightened."

When these instructions in the complete meaning of the deeds of the enlightened are explained, seventy-five thousand advanced enlightening beings in the great assembly were able to attain conscious witness of the complete reality body.

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For as long as space endures
and for as long as living beings remain
until then may I too abide
to dispel the misery of the world.
----Shantideva

Posted by: "alain laroche" allanrockwell@yahoo.ca allanrockwell
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